

Application Serial No. 10/637,204
Amendment dated
Reply to Office Action dated June 21, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 through 17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (original): A transaxle, comprising:

a housing; and

a pair of axially aligned axles rotatably supported in said housing, said axles being selectively coupled together, said axles being rotatably fixed to one another when said axles are coupled together, said axles being free to rotate relative to one another when said axles are not coupled together.

Claim 19 (original): The transaxle of Claim 18, further comprising an input shaft rotatably supported by said housing, and reduction gearing operatively coupling one of said axles to said input shaft.

Claim 20 (original): The transaxle of Claim 18, in combination with:

an engine operatively coupled to said transaxle;

a handle;

a working device being powered by said engine; and

a ground-engaging wheel connected to each said axle; whereby said combination provides an implement, movement of said implement being controlled by an operator through said handle.

Claim 21 (original): The transaxle of Claim 18, further comprising a collar having first and second positions, said collar engaging one of said axles in said first position, and said collar engaging both of said axles in said second position.

Claim 22 (original): The transaxle of Claim 21, wherein said collar is biased into one of its first and second positions.

Claim 23 (original): A transaxle, comprising:

a housing including first and second housing portions which interface substantially along a first plane;

at least one axle rotatably supported by said housing;

reduction gearing operably coupled to said at least one axle, said reduction gearing including two parallel shafts on which are disposed a plurality of gears, said shafts lying in a second plane, said first and second planes being nonparallel; and

at least one bushing supported by said housing, said bushing including a pair of shaft retaining portions, each shaft retaining portion respectively supporting one end of each of said parallel shafts, said second plane extending between said shaft retaining portions.

Claim 24 (original): The transaxle of Claim 23, wherein said second plane is substantially perpendicular to said first plane.

Claim 25 (original): The transaxle of Claim 23, in combination with:

an engine operatively coupled to said transaxle;

a handle;

a working device being powered by said engine; and

at least one ground-engaging wheel connected to said axle; whereby said combination provides an implement, movement of said implement being controlled by an operator through said handle..

Claim 26 (original): The transaxle of Claim 23, wherein said bushing is elongate, and

includes opposite ends each including a shaft retaining portion.

Claim 27 (original): The transaxle of Claim 23, wherein one of said first and second housing portions includes a recess into which said bushing is received.

Claim 28 (original): The transaxle of Claim 23, further comprising an input shaft operatively coupled to said reduction gearing.

Claim 29 (new): A transaxle, comprising:

a housing;

a first axle;

a second axle, said first axle and said second axle axially aligned and rotatably supported in said housing; and

a collar rotatably fixed to said first axle, said collar axially moveable relative to said first axle between a first position in which said collar is rotatably fixed to said first axle and is not rotatably fixed to said second axle, and a second position in which said collar

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is rotatably fixed to both said first axle and said second axle, whereby said collar rotatably fixes said first axle to said second axle when said collar is in said second position.

Claim 30 (new): The transaxle of Claim 29, further comprising an input shaft rotatably supported by said housing, and reduction gearing operatively coupling one of said first and second axles to said input shaft.

Claim 31 (new): The transaxle of Claim 29, in combination with:
an engine operatively coupled to said transaxle;
a handle;
a working device being powered by said engine; and
a ground-engaging wheel connected to each of said first and second axles;
whereby said combination provides an implement, movement of said implement being controlled by an operator through said handle.

Claim 32 (new): The transaxle of Claim 29, wherein said collar is biased into one of its first and second positions.

Claim 33 (new): A transaxle, comprising:
a housing;
a first axle;
a second axle, said first axle and said second axle axially aligned and rotatably supported in said housing; and

coupling means for selectively coupling said first axle to said second axle, said coupling means engaged with said first axle in a first configuration, said coupling means not engaged with said second axle in said first configuration, and said coupling means engaged with said first axle and said second axle in a second configuration, whereby said coupling means rotatably couples said first axle to said second axle in said second configuration,

wherein, with said coupling means positioned in said first configuration, said first axle and said second axle are not otherwise engaged with each other.

Claim 34 (new): The transaxle of Claim 33, further comprising an input shaft rotatably supported by said housing, and reduction gearing operatively coupling one of said first and second axles to said input shaft.

Claim 35 (new): The transaxle of Claim 33, in combination with:
an engine operatively coupled to said transaxle;

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a handle;

a working device being powered by said engine; and

a ground-engaging wheel connected to each of said first and second axles;

whereby said combination provides an implement, movement of said implement being controlled by an operator through said handle.

Claim 36 (new): The transaxle of Claim 33, wherein said coupling means is biased into one of its first and second configurations.